

Healing a Mind

by RenegadeThaumaturgist

Category: Halo

Genre: Family, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Arbiter, Master Chief/John-117, OC

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2013-09-14 20:41:05

Updated: 2013-09-14 20:41:05

Packaged: 2016-04-27 04:28:18

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,610

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Post Halo series event. The world is now facing durable peace, the storm covenant and the forerunner threat dealt with. Master Chief S-117 is no longer needed and he has been sent to a civilian caregiver's home for psychological recovery.
John-117/OC

Healing a Mind

The only thing that belongs to me are the OCs. The rest belongs to 343 industries.

Chapter I:

"According to your file, you have had experience rehabilitating ex-marines into the civilian life. Am I correct?" The man's question resonated from the earpiece, catching the young woman's attention once again.

"Aye, I mean yes. My two older brothers served..."

"Derek and Kenneth McGregor?" The disembodied voice rudely cutted her off, grating once again on her nerves. The fact that the UNSC knew pretty much everything about everyone could be unnerving at times, but she supposed that she should be used to it by now.

"Yes."

"Both of them have been struggling with PTSD, Kenneth having lost his left leg and an eye. However the file shows that Derek is now married, while Kenneth has earned a degree in childcare. I daresay that your rehabilitation methods have been a success. Is Kenneth currently staying within your home?" He continued monotonously.

"Yes. He helps me run the daycare."

A still, small static sound greeted her response, a sign that the correspondant is checking data. She let out an impatient huff before reaching out for a drawing pad, doodling all over it. After a few minutes, the line connected once again.

"You do understand, ma'am, that this is a marine that might have very special needs? This is the reason why we called up for volunteers."

"Special needs?" She wondered what happened to the poor lad in question for the Navy to take such measures. It was indeed the first time she has ever heard about a marine needing some sort of internship to get used to civilian life again. Those one week boot camps did not count.

"He served for almost 30 years on the frontline and has suffered through multiple grievous injuries. He is the last survivor of his team."

She could've sworn that her gobsmacked expression then was almost..audible.

"30 years? 30 years on active duty?!" She tried to keep her tone in check. What kind of army makes a man serve for over 30 years, continuously risking his life?

"This is volunteer work. We understand if you withdraw your application.."

"No, No!" She immediately replied. "I was just taken aback by the fact that a human has to endure so much!"

"That is why we make sure that he will have the proper help getting into normal life." The UNSC agent said, matter-of-factly.

"I have experience in taking care of both children and adults that needed help. I do believe that living in the environment my home offers, including close proximity with young children and animals, will heal anyone." She assuredly declared, letting her scottish burr trail behind every words.

If this veteran needed her, then she would offer all the help she possibly could. A man who did this much deserves it.

"Then it is agreed. will move in tomorrow at 10:00, if this is convenient for you?"

"Yes, it is."

She ended the conversation, a soft smile gracing her lips.

* * *

><p>The war was over. The storm covenant and the forerunner threat has been dealt with, and the galaxy is facing a durable time of peace. Every species busied themselves with rebuilding what they have lost, signing treaties of non aggression with each other or simply parting their own ways.<p>

Which rendered a war machine like John S-117 completely obsolete. He was given medals, administrative papers, money and a pat on the back. It was all a very private affair, as per his wishes ; the UNSC also considered best for him to attract as little attention as possible. Being mobbed by reporters is the least of all things someone with John's mental state would need.

Not to mention the fact that the Spartan II program is best left unmentioned to the general public.

For once in his life, John was truly anonymous. He has been forcefully removed from his comfort zone, his bare skin tingling at every breeze. The fact that he was not wearing his MJOLNIR armour made him feel vulnerable, reinforcing his sensations of paranoia. The lack of extra weight made him feel destabilized ; even breathing fresh air felt odd and slightly suspicious.

It has been long since the last time he has felt so uncomfortably nervous. So utterly...small, when the prospect of chaotic civilian life faced him. Spartan II's have never been prepared for this ; a normal life. They were not expected to survive the war, but Master Chief made it through.

He stared at his own ID card, bitterly remembering all of his fallen brothers and sisters. Remembering his mothers, Cortana and . Despite her treachery, he missed her and loved her as his own kin til the very last moment. But he was unable to stand by her, for he was conditioned to protect humanity.

She promised to give him back Cortana. She promised to clone her mind again, but John understood that there can't be a second Cortana. She was unique, and lost to him forever. He perceived Halsey's words as the ultimate betrayal, the lie. Nothing could ever replace Cortana.

He was accompanied with several Spartan IV's, but he was the one who landed the final blow. Duty over emotions.

Sleep has never been peaceful since. Psychological counselling and countless hours spent at the military psychiatrist helped but his feelings of guilt never subsided; he has committed matricide. He remembered the pitying and guilt ridden look on her face when he shot her.

"I am so sorry, John..." Were her last words as he delicately cradled her body.

He has grieved, but now only a pit of hollowness filled him.

A slight, distant sound of footsteps caused him to jerk up, his senses being knocked back to his current situation. He looked to his side and saw a young man taking a turn into the corridor he was currently sitting in. Seeing his uniform, the older man recognised him as a Lieutenant.

John stood up and saluted the younger man, who simply smiled regally at him.

"At ease" He extended his hand "You are no longer part of the army now."

The Spartan stared, briefly at loss for a few seconds before shaking it, keeping his strenght in check.

"The name's Alexander Brown." The man's grin did not falter one bit but John could see traces of apprehension and admiration in his eyes.

"Sierra-1...John Smith." He replied, the oddity of having a last name finally dawning onto him. Lt Brown nodded in acknowledgement before beckoning him to follow.

"It is my task to accompany you to your caregiver's home." Lt Brown suddenly paused, still having his perfectly white smile as he turned to face John. This caused the taller man to immediately freeze mid step, his medals clinking alltogether. The lieutenant handed him a yellow folder, before continuing: "I was told that you were notified about the measures taken. This file contains necessary information about your current civilian status."

"Yes, sir." came the automatic reply.

"Just call me Alex." The younger man eyed him inscrutably. "We should get to the Capri now, your caregiver is expecting us at 10 AM. You can browse through the papers during the ride."

"Yes, Alex."

Alexander slightly shook his head, which caused John to wonder whether or not he did something wrong.

When the exit became visible, John had the impression that the corridor was suddenly a lot shorter than it should be. Almost too short. He mentally braced himself, even if there was no imminent explosions ; He dreaded the prospect of facing the outside world. It was different when he was still part of the army - he had directives and had specific goals. Even then he couldn't help but feel slightly unstable by the bustling activities, the crowds, the lack of order everytime he was among civilians.

Now...He was alone. There was no one to point out what needed to be done; there was almost no rythm, no scheduling. His only guidance would be this caregiver but that person did not even belong to the military. He was completely and utterly at loss.

The dreaded light became more and more intense ; once he crossed the door, he was overwhelmed by this feeling of being suffocated. For once in his life, he struggled to contain his emotions and demeanour. He must have faltered slightly, for Alexander noticed his discomfort and cleared his throat.

"It's going to be hard at first but everyone gets used to it again. As long as you think about keeping yourself occupied."

John chose to remain silent at this.

Once seated in the shiny black Capri, he started reading thoroughly through the files.

The first page was an account of his current financial situation,

with his credit chip attached to it. There were directives to follow in case he lost it as well as detailed instructions about making transfers from a chip to another. It was already keyed to his DNA and if he couldn't find it, all he needed to do was to whistle. The chip would then emit a beeping sound to indicate it's location and emit signals.

His personal wealth amounted to 80 million credits but the importance of it was lost to him. He did not comprehend the concept of money well since he never needed it until now ; the entire subject was at best cryptic to him.

He also found his driver's license, among other things such as his military global insurance, semestrial health check up schedule and diverse leaflets. One even explained the necessity for a woman pregnant with his child to be kept under close watch by doctors from a specific facility.

John sighed heavily, glancing outside at the passing hills and green fields. He has never ventured on Earth that often and the sights of nature were always breathtaking. Summer's sun shone through clouds, illuminating the countryside with it's golden rays. Under it, green and healthy trees were thriving, surrounding bald hills like halos of foliage.

A time of peace his fallen siblings will not get to know.

The scenery shifted as a shiny lake came into view. Dominating it stood a structure that John recognised as a castle of sorts ; a medieval fortress, judging from the way it looked. It was the first time he has ever seen any of the likes, majestic manmade structures that stood through milleniums. He was overwhelmed by the view and the beauty of the building. Strangely enough, a small feeling surged through him ; a feeling he identified as pride, something he has never felt for anything else but his siblings.

"That's the Linlithgow Palace." Alexander explained, seeing the Spartan's obvious fascination. "It was buildt during the 12th century and served as a royal manor, as well as a military fortress. I am honestly glad that it withstood the war."

John nodded mutely as a town behind the castle became visible ; a town possibly as old as the castle. Most of the houses he could see were made with the same stones, in the same style than the palace. They were tightly and inorderly assembled around small paved streets which led to larger, modern roads. Their tiled, mossy roofs reflected brightness, creating an array of darker red tones.

Linlithgow was frozen in time.

"I don't think they could've chosen a better location." The younger man ignored John's silence. "I myself don't come from Earth ; I was born on New Jerusalem. However I don't think I've ever felt at home as much as I do on the cradle of our civilization."

The spartan's first reaction was to mentally note the date of the glassing of New jerusalem and the approximate amount of deaths. However, for a while he chose not to say anything for he was unsure how he should respond. Would it be appropriate if he offered his condolences, or should he react to Alexander's attachment to

Earth?

"This place would end up being home for any humans residing on it." He offered tentatively, to which the lieutenant smiled.

The car took a turn to the right from the High Street into one of the smaller alleys, leading them once again towards the lake's shore. The screen indicated "Whitten Lane" ; they were a few seconds away from his destination.

John took a deep breath.

The Capri stopped in front of a stone made house with wooden shutters and iron hangings. Vines covered a good half of the walls and flowers hung low from the window boxes, making the house stand out due to it's rich colours. There was a large front yard filled with rosebushes and it served as a playground of sorts ; there was a sandbox, a pile of tires and swings, as well as miscellaneous scattered toys.

There were obviously children in this place, which did not help the spartan's nervosity. He had this sudden fear that, with his size and strenght he might end up hurting them a way or another. Or that they would avoid him due to how he looked. He glanced at his wristwatch, noting that the caregiver is a few minutes late.

"It's 10:02 " He grunted "I don't see her."

The Lieutenant gave him a look: "There's a doorbell."

They stood in on the timber porch as antique brass bells chimed, before hearing some scuffling at the opposite side. The heavy wooden door creaked open, revealing a mop of red hair and a bright smile.

"Hello!" The woman said, cheerfully.

"Greetings, ma'am. I am Lt Alexander Brown and this will be your new charge, Master Chief Petty Officer John Smith of the UNSC." Alex greeted cordially, while John just stood there stiffly. The young woman seemed slightly fazed by his appearance but regained her composure rather quickly. It surprised him ; most people who saw him were intimidated by his looks and more often than not tried to back away. Her eyes trailed on the amount of medals he carried before looking up to him brightly.

"It's a pleasure to meet you John - may I call you John?"

John nodded. The fact that she called him by his name caught him slightly off guard ; the only ones who ever really did so were his fellow spartans, Cortana and Dr Halsey. He felt a slight pang in his chest before realising that he has yet to answer.

"The pleasure is mine, Ma'am."

"Oh, just call me Eilidh. Do come in, the both of you!" She held onto the knob, waving them in.

"I am sorry ma'am but..." Alexander started, but whatever he intended to say was met with a quick refusal.

"I insist." She said, moving aside. She was perhaps the shortest woman John has ever met ; she couldn't possibly surpass 4' 9. She had long fiery red hair caught up in a loose bun, a pixie face with bright green eyes and a generally small frame. He estimated her to weight around a 100 pounds, not more.

She looked so fragile. She would not have lasted one minute on the field.

****A.N :****** I never personally read the books, so I apologize if there are any inconsistencies when it comes to John's portrayal. Reviews are definitely welcomed. I've never been to Scotland either so this is completely new terrain for me, my only friend being Google maps, earth and wikipedia.**

****As you probably guessed this story is post Halo events.****

End
file.